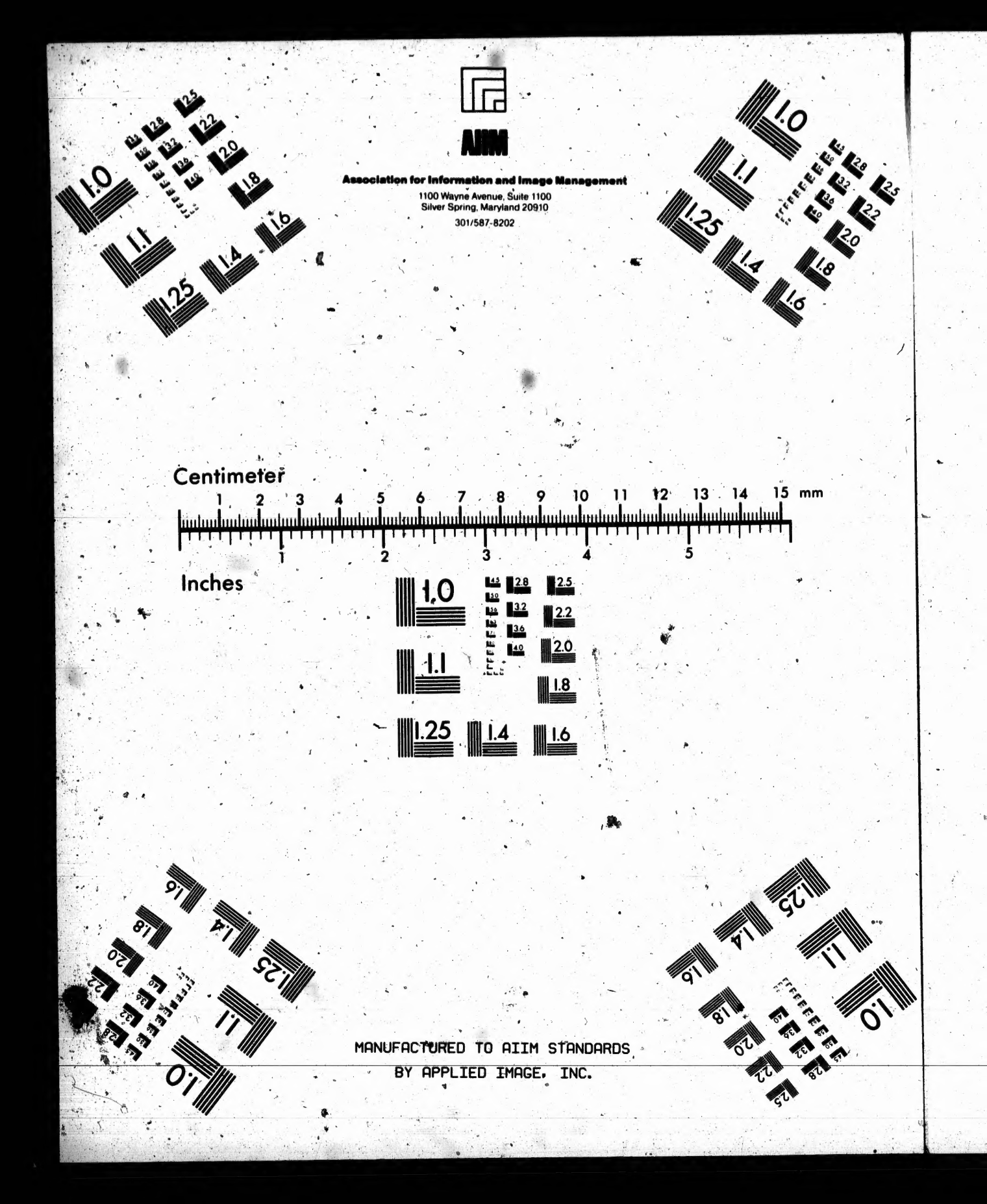
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The Father Manifested in the Son.

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN KNOX'S CHURCH, TORONTO, ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPT. 26, 1867, BY

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"Philip saith unto him Lord shew us the Father."—JOHN XIV. 8.

The question of Philip is the question of humanity. Men in all ages and under all dispensations have said Shew us the Father, and they have asked the question on these three accounts: We need to have the Unseen embodied, the Universal impersonated, and the distant brought near.

We need to have the Unseen embodied. We are spirits, but spirits embodied. The "I myself" is my soul, but my soul at present abides in a material structure. We are all of us spirits, but we are acquainted with one another through the medium of the body. We hear one another speak; we watch one another's features; we are accustomed to converse with spirit and comprehend spirit only through the body. Therefore, when we are told that God is a spirit without body, and that we can think of Him, commune with Him, love Him, we feel a difficulty in comprehending an incorporeal spirit, and we say Shew us the Father; let Him be seen by us as we see one another; let the Universal Spirit be seen by us as we see the spirits of our brethren. This has been a great difficulty with mankind. Men have always felt this necessity. In the absence of any outward and visible God, men have said Let us have symbols, and let these represent God's power—God's wisdom—God's goodness, and men have looked at these things and said It is an error to think of the invisible God. How much easier it is for the unthoughtful to adore the symbol than the actual! And thus originated idolatry, and men bowed down to idols of wood and stone, which may not have been intended to have been worshipped when they were first thought of. Thus, however, it was that idolatry became permanent, and men worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator. Idolatry witnessed to this great want of humanity—Shew us the Father.

Again we need to have the Universal impersonated. God inhabiteth immensity. Where is he? "Heaven, even the heaven of heavens, cannot contain him." He is in the river, on the mountain, in the valley, in the tiniest insect, in the loftiest seraph, in the sun as it shines by day, in the stars which in innumerable multitudes spangle and light the heavens. Wherever we roam—wherever we send our thought—there is God. How natural it was for men, seeking for God throughout the universe, and being told that throughout the universe God exists, to substitute the universe for God and become pantheists. Erroneous as is pantheism, pantheism testifies to the want of a personal God. Men would never have been pantheists if they could have seen and understood that there is a personal God. "Shew us the Father" says pantheism, and in the absence, or the supposed absence, of a reply, they worshipped the universe itself.

Again, we want to have the infinitely remote brought near. God is very far away, as being great. He, how wise,—we, how foolish! He, how mighty,—we, how weak! And still more remote is God on the ground of moral considerations. He, how holy,—we, how sinful! He, how good and glorious,—we, how mean and selfish! What a distance there is! How we shrink away—what a gulf there is between us and Him. Hence the cold religion of philosophy, that contemplated the great Creator of the universe withdrawing Himself from all particular notice of individuals. That cold, philosophical religion could only stand at a long distance and tremble, while it bowed on the vestibule of the temple. But man wants something more than that. He is an emotional being. A religion that does not appeal to our emotions will not satisfy man—will not prompt action. Morally, the philosophical theorist will not control conscience and help us to overcome our passions. Men wanted something nearer, that should represent infinity itself and serve as a deity to them. They sometimes said to their fellow men "Be ye our priests; we will look to you as the medium by which we shall approach God; He is too far away." Thus it was that superstition became the reaction from the cold religion of philosophy and testified to the same want of humanity—Shew us the Father.

The problem is solved in the answer of our Lord to Philip. He that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father. The subject is most appropriate to follow the subject of my friend who has already been addressing you. We were far off—we are made nigh by Christ. Christ reveals to us Him who was unseen, who could not be fully comprehended, could not be approached. The distance is broken in the person of Jesus Christ. "He that hath seen me," says our Lord, "hath seen the Father." But can the Father be seen? Can God be seen? Are we not told that God is a spirit. "No man hath seen God." Yet in the Old Testament we are told that God was revealed to His servants—that they saw Him. Adam, Abraham, Moses, saw God. And Philip says shew us the Father; let us have what our forefathers had. The Father shewed himself to them—let the Father be shown to us. It was Christ who was the revealer of the Father even then. There is but one mediator—but

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one revealer of God; and if we are told that God was seen by His servants in the Old Testament dispensation, He was seen through the Mediator. The angel that spoke to the patriarch was doubtless the Lord Jesus Christ in the form of an angel as he afterwards appeared in the form of a man.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the revealer of the Father. This is taught us in many parts of the Scripture most plainly; as for example in John, chapter first, we read, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him." We cannot see God, but God is revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. The same truth is taught us in a subsequent passage of the same gospel, where we read—chapter 8, verse 19: "If ye had known me ye would have known my Father also." To know me is to know Him; to comprehend me is to comprehend Him. St. Paul in writing to the Corinthians speaks about God making known to us His glory in the face of Jesus Christ. We could not see His glory in any other way, for it was revealed to us only in the face, that is in the character of Jesus Christ. Then in the Epistle to the Collosians we read of Jesus as the image of the invisible God. God is invisible and yet He has an image. We do not, we cannot see God in His essence, but God may reveal Himself, and he does reveal Himself in Jesus; and if men ask for an image here is an image—Jesus is the image, representing to us God, who is invisible and cannot be seen. The same truth is taught us in the epistle to the Hebrews, where we are told that our Lord Jesus Christ is the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His person, the exact counterpart—so far as God can have a counterpart, and a representation on which our eyes can rest—of the Father. Now if our Lord Jesus Christ is the express image of the Father's person or substance, it is very evident that the Lord Jesus Christ must himself be divine and God, for if he be a mere man or an angel he is a created being, and how can a created being be the exact image of the Creator? Is there not an infinite distance between the created being and the Creator of all things? I cannot see how a created being can be the express image of the person of the Creator. How can a finite being be the express image of an infinite being? We gather therefore that if the Lord Jesus Christ is the exact counterpart and representation of the Father he must share in the Father's deity—that is, must himself be God.

We must not, however, confound the Father with the Son, because we say that the Saviour himself must be divine, as the image and countepart of the Father. There are distinctions in the deity. Though we may not be able to comprehend the mode of the existence of God—though it may be very foolish to attempt in words of scholastic theology to define those distinctions—they are obviously taught in Scripture. For example "God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son." The giver cannot be identical with the gift. Our Lord says "I will pray the Father and He will give you another comforter." In such a verse as that the distinctions of the Trinity, are clearly stated and also the functions of each Person of the Trinity—so called for want of a better term. I, the mediator, will pray the Father, the

First Person of the Trinity, and He will send you the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. But, says some one, how can there be three distinct persons if it be true that I and my Father are one? How can there be distinctions if there be absolute unity? Why, we may understand even that to some extent. Two individuals may say We are one. Two members of one firm may say We are one. Their interests may be one. Two persons in one party may say we are one—we exactly agree in the policy of our party. Two men may say We are one in respect of this or that purpose of philathropy. Not that these instances exactly apply to the case of the Trinity, for they do not; but it may easily be seen how Jesus may say I and my Father are one, and yet teach the truth that there are distinctions between them. And so in our text. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Not that all distinctions are lost, and that there is no Father but the Son, and no Son but the Father; but that they who behold Him and comprehend Him, behold and comprehend the Father as much as it is possible for men to know and comprehend God.

Brethren, here is a great mystery of godliness. The everlasting Son of the Father comes to our world and takes our nature—works, suffers, is tempted, lives and dies as a man, in order that in the conduct and the spirit of a man He may illustrate and shew forth to us what God the invisible Father is. God in heaven we do not see. God in heaven is not suited for us if we did see Him. The splendor would dazzle us; the mode of God's existence in heaven is so unlike our own, that we should take neither comfort nor instruction from Him. Therefore, God in His mercy, when He wished to reveal Himself to man, revealed Himself in a manner suited to man's condition—in a way which man could understand—in a manner and method which would be adapted to instruct him; and now the necessity of our nature is met. Do we want an outward image to worship? Here is an image of God. It is no dishonor to God for us to bow down to Him, and no injury to us. Christ is the image of the Invisible. Do we want a personal God? Are we wearied in our search after the invisible hand? We come home from our long search, and we rejoice in the person of Jesus Christ, as representing God. In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And do we need a God who is approachable? Do we want a mediator—some one to bring God near to us? Behold the man Jesus. You can approach a man. If God had appeared to us in the form of some glorious angel, you might be afraid and shrink away; but there is nothing in the presence of that man to make you shrink from him. Holy—but how gentle and loving! One of ourselves, who can sympathize with us. A man of sorrows. You shrink away, perhaps, from a man who is very prosperous and happy. If you are in sorrow, you shrink from great prosperity and happiness. You may think That person can have no sympathy with me in his present exaltation. But if you see a man who has known grief, you say I like to approach him; he has suffered so much himself he will not scorn me. And so God has appeared to us in the form of a man of sorrows, and no one need think of

Him as a long way off. We are directed to Jesus, and are invited to come to Him; and when we come to Him—when we are close to that man—we are not far from the deity, for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. He is the image of God. He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father. And now we gaze and do not tremble. We cannot look at the bright light of the sun at noon, unclouded. Our eyes are dimmed and dazzled by the splendor. But when that light is reflected to us from the flowing stream, the lovely flower, or the smiling face of our friends, then we can see the reflected light and rejoice. And so we can see the same light of God, which would dazzle us if we looked at it directly, but which charms and cheers us as we gaze on the glory reflected in the light of the wondrous person of the Lord Jesus. The glory of God is now reflected in the face of the Lord Jesus. Now we may gaze, and not be blinded by the burning brightness. The awful voices of the throne are hushed, and the great gulf bridged over. We may approach, and not in terror. We may gaze, and not be consumed. We may touch, and not perish. O thou adored, incarnate one—divine humanity—the visible and infinite—the man, the God—I may trust, but no longer tremble. I may rejoice, as well as reverence. I may love as well as adore, for he that hath seen Thee hath seen the Father.

Now in what respect, we may ask more particularly, does Jesus Christ illustrate to us the Father? He illustrates the various attributes of the Father. Is the Father omnipresent? "I am with you always," says Jesus. Is the Father omniscient? "I am He that searcheth the heart." Is the Father immutable? "Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Is the Father omnipotent? "All power is given to me," says Jesus. Is the Father the Creator? Of Jesus we read, "Without Him was nothing made that was made." Is the Father the God of the resurrection? "Even so the Son quickeneth whom He will." Is the Father the Judge at last? "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." Is the Father the object of worship? "All men shall honour the Son as the Father." "And of the Son it is said, let all the angels of God worship Him." In such respects, brethren, he that hath seen Him hath seen the Father.

Consider the holiness of God as manifested in Jesus; and see how it is manifested in Jesus in a manner suited to our necessity. We want an example. Precept is good, but example is still better; and precept when sustained by example, best of all. Where should we look for an ensample. It is said, "Be ye followers, or imitators, of God as dear children." But how am I to imitate God? God's holiness is not exhibited as my holiness is required to be. In what two respects is the holiness of man chiefly to be exercised? What are we to be daily, chiefly about in order to please God? I think these two things—to bear sorrow patiently, and to resist temptation manfully. In these respects I am told to imitate God. How can I imitate God, as God is in heaven, in these two particulars? Has God ever seen sorrow? Am I to learn from a God who suffers sorrow patiently how to be patient myself? God never suffers. God is never patient in suffering. God gives me no example of patient suffering. I am to resist temptation. I am surrounded by it. I have had it within me. I am to be an imitator of God, but God cannot be tempted of evil. God never did yet resist any temptation for he is never tempted by it; and therefore God does not afford to me an example in this particular in which I most need an example. And if I look to man for an example I can only find imperfection, and I am almost sure to imitate the defects of a person better than his virtues. What am I to do? I want a human example, but human examples are imperfect. I am directed to God, but God's example is not a human example, and is not suited to me. I find all I want in Jesus Christ. He is God manifested, and therefore His conduct is perfect, but it is exhibited in the conduct of man; and therefore it is an example that is imitable. Our Lord Jesus Christ in these two things most prominently manifested His holiness—the patient endurance of sorrow—and the steady resistance of temptation. He was a man of sorrows. Christ's whole life was spent in sorrow. He was always shewing His patience and resignation to His Father's will, and therefore the holiness of God represented to me in the patient suffering of the man, Christ Jesus, is represented to me in a manner suited to me for imitation. Our

Lord Jesus Christ was tempted, He had a real human body, and consequently he had every instinct and passion just as we have. There is nothing sinful in any part of our body—in any one instinct that we have; the only thing sinful is our abuse of what God has made pure and beautiful. Christ had our nature, and having it he was open to temptation. When He was in the wilderness very hungry it was a real temptation to provide himself miraculously with food. It would have been sin to do so in the manner He was tempted to do it; but it was a real temptation because it would have been real gratification, and He put away a real temptation when He denied Himself a real gratification. It was a real temptation on another occasion to spare himself when Peter took the devil's part, though he did not mean it, and said, "This thing shall not happen to thee," and when our Lord, tender, gentle, loving as He was, said to Peter in the earnestness of His spirit, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Our Lord therefore, throughout His life, set us the example of patient suffering and steady resistance of temptation. Now we are to be imitators of God, but how can we be imitators of a God that does not suffer, and is not tempted? God is manifested to us in the person of Jesus, a man who is tempted and who suffers; and therefore the holiness of God is revealed to us in the manner we need it, for "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

We might speak of the justice of God as manifested on the cross of Christ. To this your attention has been directed, and this wonderful exhibition of justice, which shews God's disapproval of sin and at the same time his forgiveness of the sinner,—this was manifested to us by Jesus on the Cross when he magnified the law by bearing our sin. He that hath seen and rightly understood the sacrifice of Christ sees exhibited the justice of the Father.

But he that hath seen Jesus hath seen the love of the Father. If the necessities of universal love required it, God's grace did not withhold it. He that hath seen Jesus die for sin hath seen the Father's love. Not as some of the hymns put it

Quenching the Father's vengeful sword
In His own dying blood;

but manifesting the love of the Father—the love that prompted the sacrifice.

But brethren, not simply in the death of Christ but throughout the life of Christ was the Father manifested. I love to look on the life of the Father as manifested by Him. We have four lives in the four gospels, and what is the meaning of them? Are we to gather merely that a man named Jesus lived at a certain time and did certain things? If we only read the Gospels with that view we miss their great meaning. These Gospels are a reflection of God—God revealed to us in the life and character of his Son Jesus Christ. And if you look upon everything Jesus did and listen to every word he spake as illustrating the character of God, then you will indeed see the infinite preciousness of these four gospels. And that is the meaning of it. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." The disciples are with Jesus, seeing him and hearing what he said. And Jesus said to Philip, who asked him to show him the Father, he that hath seen me hath seen the Father. Brethren then let us try to look at Christ more—to ponder his life and consider him as representing to us what the Father is. For example, those women bringing to Jesus their little children, feeling that if that wonderful teacher would only bless them and put his hand upon them they would be the better for it in some way or other, and the disciples foolishly, but meaning well, sending them away that he might not be disturbed—Jesus who was never angry before was angry then—was sore displeased—and said "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;" and he took them in his arms and put his hand upon them and blessed them. That was the Father. It was not simply Jesus of Nazareth. That is how God instructs all mothers who are anxious for their little ones to bring them to him. That is the way the tender, loving God in heaven looks upon the little feeble babes and tottering children, and teaches us that we may carry these little ones to him and that he will bless them. We have been told that "like as a father pitieth his children, even so the Lord pitieth them that fear him;" but here is an example of it—here is a manifestation of it—here is God doing it. There was a man who had the leprosy—foul and polluted by it—and people shrank away from him lest they should be defiled. But he came to Jesus. It was his only chance of cure. "Lord if thou wilt, he says, thou canst make me clean." And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, "I will, be thou clean," and immediately his leprosy was

cleansed. It was the Father that did this. It shows how God looks upon the sick and afflicted, even the defiled and the loathsome; and it shows to those who are defiled and loathsome, if they come to him in that spirit, that our Father above is ready to heal and save us. He that hath seen Jesus doing that hath seen the Father.

Jesus was on a missionary journey, anxious no doubt to fulfil it. Many of us would not be dissuaded from an object we have in view, especially a religious one, and perhaps would not be diverted from a theological or spiritual study by even a call of philanthropy. Not so Jesus. There was a funeral. There was a broken hearted woman following the body of a young man. Jesus knew all about it—how she was a widow following her only son. Could He see it and pass by? Impossible. He turned aside and stopped the funeral, raised the dead, delivered him to his mother. That is the key to it all. What a loving heart His was! But it was the Father that did it. "He that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father." That is the representation of the invisible God. That is the way God looks on the sorrowful. He does not come out of His way by miracle to raise the dead, but in that spirit He looks on all weeping mothers, weeping over their children, and all who in this sorrowful world are plunged in tears.

And so when He, the same Jesus, stood at the grave of his friend Lazarus, though he knew he was to be restored—when he saw those around weeping, and beheld through the long avenue of tears, how many funerals and desolate homes there are in the world, it was then Jesus wept, and it was the Father weeping in Jesus. This represents to us how God feels. Yes, there is pity, sympathy, tender love, in God's heart. You don't see it in the shining of the sun, in the splendour of the stars; you don't see it in the varied changes of nature; but God sent his Son to shew it, and therefore said Jesus, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."

There was a poor woman who had wandered from the ways of virtue. Perhaps her own mother had shut the door against her. There are people who think a great deal more of what fashion and the world think, than of even the claims of maternity and the duties they owe their children. Perhaps this girl would have been glad to get home again, but her parents said No, you have disgraced the family name and you may go—yes, to the devil; we will not open the door to you. There was no one to save her. Those who seemed good were stern and cold like the Scribes and Pharisees; but, yes, there *was* one who she had heard was perfectly good and kind—one who never treated harshly any broken-hearted sinner, however bad that sinner was She had heard words from Him which had made her hope that for her there was mercy still; and her heart relented. She had hope in God. She wanted to express her gratitude. She loved much. She came in with the crowd. She staid behind. Her tears flowed on his sacred feet, she wiped them with the hair of her head. The Scribes looked scornfully at her and at him for allowing it, but in the presence of them all, Jesus turned and said, Woman, thy faith hath saved thee; thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace. But it was not only Jesus of Nazareth, it was God the Father that did this. That is the way God acts. That is the way God looks upon every poor wanderer from goodness that wants to come back again. That is the way God looks upon every one in this assembly, who feels that he has wandered far from God, and that, perhaps, those who ought to help him have only sent him further away into sin and wickedness. But God above, our Heavenly Father, wants you home and comes a great way to meet his prodigal children; and he has represented himself to us in the person of Jesus Christ.

See where it shines in Jesus' face,
The brightest image of his grace;
God in the person of His Son
Hath all his mightiest works outdone.

He that hath seen Jesus hath seen the Father.

Let us adore, brethren, the wisdom of the gospel. There are some would-be philosophers who sneer at this doctrine of the incarnation—who ridicule the idea of God being manifested in the man. Why it is the one way in which God can manifest himself to man, so far as we know, in a manner suited to us. By manifesting himself to us, I say, as God, even as an angel who does not know sorrow, his manifestation would not be suitable for us. We speak to children in a manner children can understand. A philosopher speaking to a child would use childish language;

and God speaking to us uses the language of earth, of humanity, of sorrow, of temptation — the only language we can understand — in order that we may be drawn to Him in love and service. Let us learn by this that Jesus is the way to the Father. God was far off, but we are made nigh by the blood and atonement of Christ—the example, the life, the spirit of God. We are to know God in Christ. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." "If any man thirst," said Jesus, "let him come unto me and drink." It is a delusion to think we can be saved without Christ. Christ would not have come into the world if you could have been saved without him. Don't think of trifling with the mercy of God. Christ is the revealed way to God, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." O then, penitent sinner, draw near to God through Jesus Christ. There is no reason why you should fear. As Jesus was, God is. I am sure that if Jesus Christ were here in this church to-night, you, however guilty, would feel you could come and approach him. You say, Yes, if I had lived when Jesus was on earth—drunkard, swearer, prodigate, sensual murderer, though I might be—I could come and tell Him, and if I was sorry and wished to lead a better life, I know that Jesus who is the friend of sinners would say kind and encouraging words to me. But Jesus is gone, and I can only think of God as the great, awful ruler and judge. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Yes brethren, the Father remains to us what Jesus was; he is unchanged.

Think then of God as you may think of Jesus. If you want to know what God is read those gospels. Read the manner in which Jesus treated sinners, and think of God as in Jesus Christ—as that loving, tender, Saviour who looked round upon the dying and guilty, and said come unto me all ye that are weary and I will give you rest—and so Come and cast your burden of guilt and your troubled spirit on Him and He will receive, and pardon, and save you.

And, sorrowful believer, bring all your troubles to God. He is a sympathising God—a loving, tender Father. He is what Jesus was, and as you tell your sorrows to Jesus you tell them all to God, for he that hath seen Jesus hath seen the Father. And let all adore the Father in the Son—the Invisible as embodied in Him—the Universal as impersonated in Him—the distant as brought nigh by Him. Let us come with confidence. Let us approach with boldness. The glory of His attributes shall not terrify us not. It is a throne of sapphire, but round it there is the immaculate rainbow of the promise. There is the majesty of God, but there is the sympathy of man. O come; let us worship and bow down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker. Thou art the King of glory O Christ. Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father. When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man thou didst not abhor the virgin's womb. The glorious company of the apostles praise thee. The goodly fellowship of the prophets praise thee. The noble army of martyrs praise thee. The holy church throughout all the world doth acknowledge thee. Thou art the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. He that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father.

Kelley
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